1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

TABLE 8 (*continued*)

443 Killaloe, third Monday in January, February 28, March 28, April 12, May 20, June 26, July 16, August 12, September 3, October 20, November 17, first Tuesday after Christmas, cattle and sheep
Kilmihill, January 7, February 15, March 30, May 19, July 18, August 15, September 28, November 1, December 13
Kilmurry M'Mahon, May 24
Kilrush, last Wednesday in each month, for pigs; January 16, February 22, April 13, May 10, June 12, September 1, October 12, November 16, for cattle and sheep; March 25, first Thursday in June, October 10, November 23, for horses
Labasheeda, June 10, August 10, October 10, December 10
Liscannor, January 6
Lisdoonvarna, April 1, May 1, November 1, December 1
Miltown Malbay, February 1, March 9, May 4, June 21, August 11, September 10, October 18, December 9. Pigs first Thursday of each month
Mullagh, January 1, March 17
Newmarket-on-Fergus, December 20
O'Brien's Bridge, March 18, July 25, November 17
O'Callaghan's Mills, June 27, November 14
Quin, July 7 (cattle and sheep), November 1 (horses, cattle, and sheep)
Ruane, June 17, September 26
Scarriff, January 5, February 1, March 3, April 3, May 1, June 2, July 5, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 3, December 9, pigs day previous
Sixmilebridge, December 5
Spancil-hill, June 23, 24
Tulla, last Tuesday in January and February, March 25, April 25, May 13, June 15, July 19, August 15, September 29, October 19, November 9, December 7

438 In these ever-larger overlapping market areas the natural
133 physical divisions of the countryside are well represented. The great central mass of Mount Callan divides West Clare from the rest of the county. It divides as well the market districts of Ennis and Kilrush. In the valley of the Fergus River, which drains the highlands of Mid-Clare to the north and East Clare beyond the corcasses (rough marshlands) to the east, the human flow of trade and produce exchange tends downward to the towns of Ennis and Clarecastle, at the head of tidewater. The high country marking the divides over into the Inagh and Cullinagh rivers and into the lake country of North Clare, just south of the gaunt hills
438 of Burren, divides the market district of Ennis from the smaller districts upon which the villages of Ennistymon, Corrofin, and Lisdoonvarna draw. Yet these villages in their turn are within the region of Clare from which the

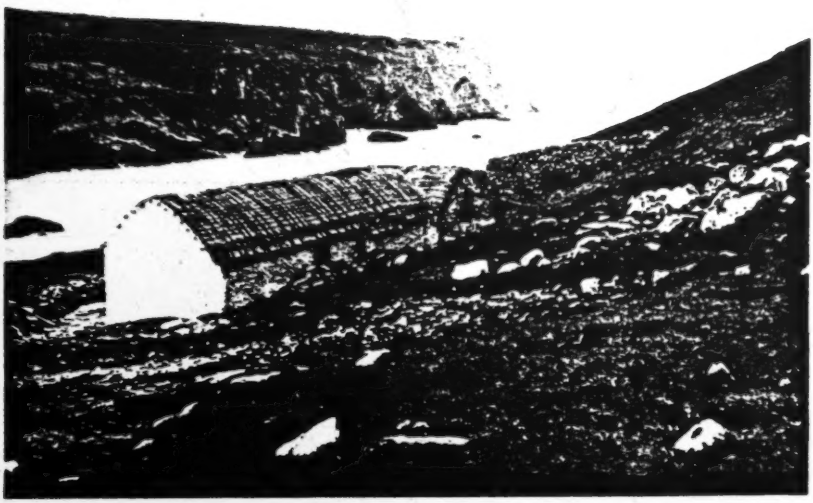
PLATE XLV

342 1. Roof with couples joined by two crossbeams. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Stream-lined roof. Port, Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

1.

[133]



2.

[p.215]

7:Johnson K-4 (no date) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

361
311
133

FIG. 1—Panoramic view of dispersed farmsteads near Carrinure, County Armagh, looking west along the drumlin belt of north Ireland. (Photograph by J. K. St. Joseph, from Cambridge University Collection. British Crown Copyright Reserved.)

361 McCourt[5] has been able to map the distribution of relicts of clachan settlement as they were to be found in the 1830's. He has shown that this was a widespread form of settlement in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it did not disappear in the remoter parts of the country until late in the nineteenth.[6] Indeed, occasional clachans that are still actively functioning can be found today on the Atlantic seaboard (Figs. 2 and 3[7]).

311 361 Associated with clachan settlement was a form of open-field cultivation, comparable to the Scottish infield-outfield system and generally known in

[113]

[5] D. McCourt: The Rundale System in Ireland: A Study of Its Geographical Distribution and Social Relations (Thesis, Ph.D., Queen's University, Belfast, 1950).

[6] D. McCourt: Traditions of Rundale in and around the Sperrin Mountains, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, Ser. 3, Vol. 16, 1953, pp. 69–84; *idem*: The Rundale System in Donegal: Its Distribution and Decline, *Journ. County Donegal Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1955, pp. 47–60.

[7] The author thanks Captain C. Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission for drawing his attention to the photograph presented as Figure 3.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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haps our knowledge of the strains which make up the peoples of the world, Ireland included, may stand us in good stead.

Already such work as this will show us the relation of the Irish to other European strains and help us to trace out historical currents in the country. Think of the field such work opens! Where is the Gael pure today? Who is the Firbolg, the aboriginal whom the Milesians found in possession? Who and where are the invading Gall? Briton, Norman, Dane, Fleming, Saxon, Englishman and Scotsman brought their bloods to this land and mingled them with the Gael. What traces have they all left and what bloods are at work today?

All these queries, nevertheless, do not primarily concern us in this discussion. The antiquity of some of the data stimulates another inquiry. But we cannot escape the sway of these other considerations entirely. There is no reason why we should. Even if they can offer us no direct aid, they can, nevertheless, afford us a stimulation.

Some such thoughts as these must have been in the social anthropologist's mind when he first made his way into a rural community. I cannot speak for my colleagues, Mr. Warner of Chicago University and Mr. Kimball of Harvard, who helped to gather the field material on Ireland. But I *can* speak for myself.

I felt Ireland's fascination as I toiled along behind my bicycle up the mountain road that runs

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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from the narrow valley lands at Doolin in the extreme north-west of County Clare. I was on my way to my first stay in an Irish west-country farm community. My road, no wider than a bridle-path, led up a sharp escarpment out of the tiny valley which empties its stony river into the Atlantic, not three miles away from the southernmost island of Aran. Once the top of the rim is reached the mountainside flattens out into a green and gently sloping table-land. Standing there one can see the whaleback rocks that are the Aran Islands and the masses of Mount Elva on the southern shore of Galway Bay. Far beyond in Connemara, one can catch the glint of the Twelve Pins, if the day is 'hard' and sunny. Off to the left, the table-land breaks off abruptly three hundred feet downward into the Atlantic, for the famed Cliffs of Moher are here, reminders of an Irish mountain that the sea has shorn off clean.

The community toward which I was making my way lies along the table-land between mountain-top of bracken and black bog and the cliffs. It keeps up the old tradition. It calls itself Luogh, and its language, at least that of the old people, is Irish, but the young people are forgetting the old tongue. English is the more common speech today, even here. Yet Mr. Delargy, the editor of the *Irish Folklore Journal*, has collected a large number of stories, songs and traditional tales and sayings here, some of them going back to the saga cycles.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER II.

HOW IRELAND TOOK SHAPE.

101
131 " To comprehend the homestead and its home-folk, from the thatch of the roof to the colour of the children's hair, we must find the locality on the domed surface of the earth, and must realize that this earth is a very large and dominant region round it." So wrote the late Grenville Cole, wisest of Ireland's geographers. This island, then, lies in the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean, midway between the Lofoten Islands and the Straits of Gibraltar, a detached but not isolated fragment of the drowned coast of Eurasia. Throughout the ages, as Europe sank repeatedly under the waters of the ocean, this outer margin, worn down by rains and rivers, received fresh marine deposits over and over again, so that its rocks record all the main features of the history of western Europe.

133
175 Lying in the middle latitudes of the continent, it shares the converging mountain systems of north and south, the older axis of Scandinavia dominating the build of the north of Ireland while the younger axis linked with France and Spain prevails in the south. The lead thus given in the remote ages of geology has been followed, over and over again, by man and his cultures converging on this last outpost of Europe. From across the Atlantic, too, Ireland has received much in recent centuries; here the alien potato was first welcomed; and it was the " praty " which drove masses of Irishmen back along the route it had itself taken. " Ireland lieth aloof in

[p. 15]
[p. 14 is blank]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 175 the West Ocean," wrote Campion, but one cannot attempt to interpret Ireland without reference to its neighbouring lands and seas. The links with Britain are strongest and oldest, alike in geology and history, in the north-east. Here both rocks and men have common roots on both sides of the North Channel: from Carlingford round to Swilly this "Region of the Loughs" looks out towards familiar coasts and islands. In geology as in history, it is as difficult to consider Ireland apart from Britain as the islets of Ireland apart from Ireland. A brief summary will reveal a geological story as troubled as its political history. Fig. 2.

133 The oldest rocks are the gnarled and crumpled sediments of the north and west, running in broken masses from Connemara to north Antrim. Here the resistent hardened sandstones (quartzites) stand up in conspicuous cones (Errigal, Muckish, Croagh Patrick, the Twelve Pins) while the gleaming schists are generally worn down into bog-filled hollows, though they rise to over 2,000 feet in the Sperrins. These rocks, together with great thicknesses of shales and mudstones worn off them, were involved in the great earth-ridgings named, from their presence in Scotland, "Caledonian." Further south, hard quartzites also give the Great Sugarloaf of Co. Wicklow its bold outline, while massive intrusions of molten rock forced up during the Caledonian folding cooled to give wide exposures of moorland granites both in the long chain of the Wicklows and in scattered hills of the north and west.

Next in succession came the Old Red Sandstones, formed under semi-arid conditions out of the débris of sand and pebbles rolled down from the mountains. As the sea flooded back once more, a rich marine life left behind a great thickness of limestone, still to-day, despite its solubility and rapid weathering, the most continuous and widespread of all the Irish rocks. The Great Central Plain, worn down to a uniform level, is floored with limestone, and the seas have cut into it, in Donegal and Galway Bays, so as to separate the three mountain masses of the west coast and leave Connacht projecting like a Wilder Wales from the Irish mainland.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 2.

[p. 17]

c

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 At the end of the Carboniferous period, swamp and forest darkened the surface of the limestone, and the coal measures were laid down. Then the earth's crust was crumpled once more along lines running east and west through south Ireland and through Brittany and Spain. Thus Cork and Kerry received their folded structure and scenic features. Except for small patches the coal measures have all been worn away by the agents of denudation, and so Ireland has been saved the wealth and the poverty of an industrial revolution. The limestones too have gone from the summits of the ridges, leaving barren but picturesque masses of the underlying sandstones exposed in long mountain lines—the Reeks of Kerry, the purple hills of Killarney and the high walls of the Galtees and the Comeraghs. This folding is known as the Armorican or Hercynian—named after Brittany and the Harz Mts. respectively (Fig. 2).

Again the land rose to receive deposits of New Red Sandstones, followed by the clean chalk and sandy beaches of the Cretaceous Sea. When Ireland once more emerged, its rolling chalk downs were destined to be carved away except in the north-east, where molten rocks poured out around the North Channel to make the Antrim basalts, protecting the underlying chalk and giving this corner of Ireland its striking coast scenery of black and white rocks. In the chalk the first inhabitants of the island, coming from the Scottish coast, were to find abundant flint for their implements. During the igneous phase the granite Mournes and the Carlingford Hills were thrust up, the last additions to the Irish mountains.

From this time on, although there have been ups and downs, Ireland was never submerged beneath the sea, but before it took final shape it suffered the invasion of ice which has left its mark on every feature of the landscape. In the north-east, true to tradition, it was Scottish ice that swept over the Region of the Loughs from Swilly to Carlingford, but elsewhere the ice-fields were fed by the glaciers of Donegal, Sligo, Galway and Kerry. The great central "basin" became the dumping ground for the débris of the surrounding

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

hills, whose rocks were scraped into the smooth rounded forms known as " roches moutonnées," or splintered, in steep rock faces above the ice, into the walls of mountain corries. Widely scattered over the plain and through the marginal valleys from Limerick to Carlow and from Cavan to Antrim are the winding ridges of sand and gravel called eskers. They mark the stages in the retreat of the ice-sheet as it melted away and left its rock rubbish to be sorted out by water into great curving dumps. To-day these " green hills," as they are often called, rise in surprising freshness of contour and colour from the level plain. They are often followed by winding tracks which thus avoid the damp plain. Fig. 2.

Elsewhere the ice left behind a solid residue of clay and boulders, often to a depth of many feet, generally levelled by flooding waters from the ice-edge but sometimes piled into shapely steep-sided hills elongated in the direction in which the ice moved. These drumlins, or " little hills," give much of the border country, from south Down through Armagh and Monaghan to Cavan, Lough Erne and Donegal Bay its characteristic scenery. Their steep sides and the confused drainage of winding streams and lakelets to which they give rise long made the drumlin country a considerable obstacle to movement; and with other physical factors it helped to isolate the north from the rest of the country in early times. Southwards over the western parts of the plain, ice scooped out hollows and blocked rivers to form lakes many of which have been filled up with bog. But on the whole the ice-sheet, through its mantle of deposits, gave more than it took away: " the cold that for a time drove out life, in the end largely contributed to the fertility of Irish land." Fig. 3.

When warmer times returned and plants and animals began to find their way to the outpost of Europe, the land stood higher than to-day. Ireland was then, as it has been through most of its geological history, an integral part of Europe, and the great Irish deer roamed over the continent from the Atlantic to the Baltic. We are now within measurable distance of modern times, say 10,000 years ago, and it is

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

133 possible that the first Irishmen saw the great deer before it disappeared. But again the land sank and tides swept through the North Channel while the Atlantic storms carved their way deep into the western seaboard. Drowned valleys indent the coast and the hills have their feet in the water. There have been minor oscillations since, so that the clays of Belfast and the beaches of County Antrim lie raised above water level, but the stage was now set, in the essentials of hills and valleys, clouds and rains, for man and his animals to come and do their work. Basalt and granite, sand and clay, sandstone and slate, limestone and chalk and flint—all in various ways have helped man to make the cultural landscape of fields, fences, roads and buildings.

Ireland as man first saw it, then, was an island of many mountain masses, varied in rock structure and shape, clothed with wild forests and separated by many inlets of the sea, by slow-flowing rivers and wide stretches of shallow lakes and plains. Its highest summits rise near the sea: Slieve Donard in Mourne, Errigal, the Twelve Pins, Carrantuohill, the Comeraghs, and Lugnaquilla in the Wicklows, all of them between 2,400 and 3,400 feet high, are all in sight of the sea. Yet this land of mountains has an extensive plain, averaging only 250 feet in height, set in its heart, while marginal plains are half-submerged in the north-east (Lough Neagh) in the north-west (Lough Erne) and the west (Loughs Mask and

Fig. 3. Drumlin landscape of the N.W., with quartzite cone behind.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Corrib). Difficulties of communication are such that the Central Plain has never been central in anything more than name: Athlone has become a national centre only with radio communication, and the Shannon remains a boundary river throughout its course. The important part of the plain is the fifty mile stretch which faces the Irish Sea between the bays of Dundalk and Dublin, the heart of the old Kingdom of Meath and of the English Pale, and the setting of Ireland's capital sites from the sacred tombs of New Grange through the age of Celtic Tara to the historic city of Dublin. One factor in the location of this metropolitan area is suggested by Fig. 8; it is favoured by the relatively low rainfall of less than 30 ins.

133 [207] 133 175 [132]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER III.

THE LANDSCAPE.

THE BEGINNINGS.

133 137 311 The landscape of a long inhabited country like Ireland is in large measure the work of man, whose farms, fields and fences are the result of many centuries of sustained effort. One might think of the wild thorn hedges and the piled stone "ditches" as mere sample remnants of woods and stones that once covered the face of the land. The extent of the change brought about may be judged by the fact that from being a land clothed with forest from the sea-coasts high up into the mountains, Ireland to-day is the least wooded country in Europe. In this work of forest destruction man has been assisted by his domestic animals and by changes of climate which have resulted in the accumulation of bogland. It is one of the paradoxes of Ireland that while the main lines of her mountains took shape in the remote ages of geological time, wide areas are dominated by the peat deposits which have been formed in the few thousand years that have elapsed since the ice age. The contrast of age is accentuated by those of colour and relief, for far across the level brown bogs rise blue in the distance some of the oldest mountains in Europe. In the middle distance, completing the picture, will be the green hills of the eskers.

137 The heart of the island, the Irish midlands, is a veritable Black Country, black with peat, not with the grime of coal-fields. Here in the boglands there are twelve contiguous

[p.23]

[p.22 is blank]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

121 The inquiry was conducted on almost exactly the same lines as that of last year; the slight differences of method being either due to changes made as the result of former experience or to local causes; but every effort was made to ensure as great uniformity as possible, a matter of much importance as facilitating comparison of results.

In this report the same headings as used in the previous one, and arranged in the same order, have been adhered to as closely as possible, so as to allow of easy reference.

II.—Physiography of the Islands.

131 The two islands under consideration, together with several small uninhabited islets, form the parish of Inishbofin; they are situated 101 outside the mouth of Killary Bay, and are distant some thirty-six miles from Westport, and about sixteen miles from Clifden, Co. Galway, the nearest town of any size. The post town is Cleggan, a small village on a point of the mainland, about seven miles from Inishbofin. Of the two main islands Inishbofin (locally called Bofin or Boffin) is much the larger, as out of the total area of the parish of 3151 acres, it contains 2312.

133 Its greatest length is about four miles, and it varies in breadth from half a mile to over two miles. The nature of its coast line is greatly varied; at some places, as at Knock-quarter or East End, being low and sandy; at others, as on the north side, and at Dun More on the western extremity, being rocky, at times rising into high and jagged cliffs worn into coves and natural bridges; while, again, in other places it is high bluff overhanging a shingly foreshore. The [504] harbour is very safe and well sheltered, and looks S.W. The coast of Shark, which lies about a mile S.W. of Inishbofin, is much more rocky, and may be said to be precipitous nearly all round, and much broken into by caves and deep fissures a few yards wide, with precipitous overhanging walls. It is difficult to land on this island if the weather be at all rough, and the inhabitants are often stormbound for weeks at a time. The difficulty and danger of landing is not so great [653] as it used to be since the building of a new pier by the Government as a relief work in 1892. Mr. Michael Lavelle, writing about the natives of this island, says:—"It is very hard for these people to live; they may be two months before they can go to Boffin to get some commands, and they live during that time on potatoes and 'white wine.'"

The principal rock of both islands is gneiss, but belts of steatite are also found.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

The surface of the land presents much variety, a large part consisting either of moor and bog or of rocky hills, some of which reach a height of nearly 300 feet, but much of the soil is said to be of good quality. There are several small loughs in Inishbofin, lying in the hollows between the hills, and numerous wells and small rills which are kept well supplied by the frequent heavy rains. 133 [134]

The following description of the islands is given in the memoir of Sheet 83 of the Geological Survey.

With reference to Inishshark the authors say:—

"It is bleak and wild, rocky towards the west and north-west, while there is an envelope of drift on the eastern slopes. At the north-west shore are high and almost perpendicular cliffs.

"As the drift contains numerous angular and semi-angular blocks and fragments of local rocks, it is probably of moraine origin. . . . . On Inishshark there are igneous rocks. . . . identical with those which have been called melapyre by Mr. David Forbes. These occur in wide dykes, weathering much more rapidly than the associated schists, and form deep narrow ravines that have the local name of Boher-na-collig (*Anglice*, the road of the old hag or witch). . . . *Inishbofin* has a general E. and W. bearing; on the average it is four miles long and two wide, but the north and south coasts are indented with bays; and at Lough Bofin, from sea to sea, is not half a mile.

"The island consists of five hills, namely, Westquarter, its greatest height being 292 feet; it forms a promontory nearly separate from the rest of the island, being connected by the previously-mentioned low isthmus in which Lough Bofin is situated; Middlequarter, highest peak, 288 feet; Cloonamore, the N.E. hill having a height of 157 feet; Knock, the hill east of the harbour, 271 feet; and, Inishlyon, 143 feet, which is a tidal island, and separated from the other hills during high water. Most of the island is rocky, having a thin peat coating, except the valley of Boffin Harbour, where there is a considerable thickness of drift which gives the island a verdant aspect when viewed from the southward."

The climate is mild even in winter, frost being rare, and snow not lying if it should chance to fall; but these advantages are counterbalanced by the frequent fierce storms which often cut off all communication with the mainland for days, and by the heavy and long-continued rains. 132

The warmth and damp of the climate are probably due, to some extent, to the impinging of part of the Gulf Stream upon the islands, as several of the glass globes set afloat to test the current have been

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in
631 its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

●133 Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

extreme north point of the peninsula. Off this part of the coast lies Eagle Island, high and rocky in coast and surface, and a lighthouse-station. From Frenchport (or rather Annagh Head, its southern boundary) southward, the coast is sandy beach, shingle, and low rocks, and is backed to a large extent by rolling ranges of sandhills. Off this part of the coast lie Iniskea and Duvillaun, having a sandy or rocky shore, and a surface of no great elevation. The eastern shore along Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven is sheltered and low.

The surface of the Mullet does not reach any very great elevation, the highest point in the northern part being 410 feet above sea level, and the rounded granite hill of Tarmon, in the extreme south, 369 feet. It is much diversified, a good deal of it being fertile land, especially on the east side, but in the north part there is a good deal of bog and moor, and in the south and west rolling sandhills barely held in check by bent. In some of the narrower portions a fertile belt lies between two sandy ones.

The district of Portacloy is a wild mountainous region, with a coast of precipitous cliffs of great height, and riddled with caves. Benwee Head, which rises above the sea to the height of 1000 feet, is just outside the mouth of the deep narrow inlet which forms the harbour. The surface of this part of the district is very wild, and consists largely of bog and mountain. The climate is very mild, frost and snow being of infrequent occurrence and not lasting for long, but the rains are heavy and almost constant during the greater part of the year, and storms are frequent and severe.

Vegetation flourishes well, but, owing to the storms, trees are very few and only grow in sheltered localities.

The whole district is largely cut off from the outer world by the wide stretch of wild and sparsely peopled country through which the mail road from Ballina runs.[1]

III.—ANTHROPOGRAPHY.

1. *Methods.*—The methods employed did not differ to any great extent from those made use of on the two previous occasions. A few

[1] I am indebted to Mr. G. H. Kinahan, M.R.I.A., for the following note on the geology of the Mullet:—The south rough portion is granite, while the north rough portion is in part Archæan (*query, the equivalent of the Sutherland Algonkian rocks* that *have been called Old Bay*), and in part of Archæan quartzite (query, the equivalents of the Scotch Torridan Sandstone); while the central portion is occupied by schists of an uncertain age that lie unconformably on the Archæan rock to the northward.

12: Freeman K-5 (1954) 1958
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

[p.204(B)]

000
206 railway was closed in 1925. But the Inishbofin postmistress operates a radiotelephone.

The Landscape

●133 Three types of landscape are characteristic: first, craggy hills of no great altitude, with a maximum of 292 feet in Westquarter, 288 feet in Middlequarter, and 271 feet in Knock; second, the farmed rolling countryside ranging from sea level to about 150 feet, and having some natural drainage; and, third, an area of sand dunes and blown [311] sand in the extreme east, once settled and farmed but now used only for rough pasture. The larger of the two lakes, Lough Bofin, is held back by a magnificent shingle ridge in a fine bay, partially protected from strong winds and high seas but open to northerly gales. The coast is rocky almost everywhere and there are some splendid cliffs [504] with outlying stacks: the best harbor is the long inlet on the south side. No recent geological work has been done

[p.204(C)]

●133 here, but the original memoir[7] states that the rocks are mainly schists and gneisses, dipping at sharp angles of 30°–89°, much broken by faults and seared by sills and dikes. In short, it is a characteristic pre-Cambrian area.

314 Peat several feet deep is found in the basins between the numerous small hills. Many people cut "scraws," that is, the surface layers of the rough pasture. This time-hallowed practice, noted with disapproval by the Congested Districts Board inspectors 60 years ago,[8] increases year by year the area of exposed rock; it may well be that throughout the peat-consuming areas of Ireland—and of Scotland also—this has happened.[9] As one observer put it, "every

[113]

[7] Memoirs of the Geological Survey, Explanatory Memoir . . . sheets 73 and 74 (in part), 83 and 84, Dublin 1876, pp. 39–42.

[8] Congested Districts Board, Base Line Reports, Clifden district, 1891 (and many more such comments in other reports).

[9] F. Fraser Darling: West Highland Survey, London, 1955, pp. 43, 67, 272–276. See especially an interesting survey of what (in Scotland) is called "skinned land" in Lewis by M. Macdonald.

[Text continues on p. 205(B)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

178 poverty, and it is the wish of nearly everyone to have a house
[361] where he cannot be overlooked. What is surprising in the light of these physical changes is the extent to which old customs and habits of mind survive to this day. As the late R. A. S. Macalister wrote in his last book, perhaps not entirely without malice: 'The importance of Ireland is that, thanks to the 'time-lag', it has rendered to Anthropology the unique, inestimable, indispensable service of carrying a primitive European *Precivilization* down into late historic times, and there holding it up for our observation and instruction.'[1]

178 Finally we should notice how the physical diversity of the country conspired with its remoteness to permit the survival
133 through the centuries of indigenous peoples and customs. 'Mountainy men', in the picturesque Irish phrase, keep their foothold in every corner of the land, for mountain refuges lie all around the coast. Even the broad central lowland is diversified by several isolated ranges, still more by extensive bogs where movement has always been difficult. Before forest clearance and drainage were effected, woods, lakes and bogs were widespread, and the English made every effort to destroy the forest remnants because they sheltered the native 'wood-kernes'. So it had been in Norman England; where the land became difficult, through mountain or forest, or where water filled large spaces, the pikesman or bowman could hold his own against the man on horseback, and a democratic flavour was in the air.

[1]R. A. S. Macalister, *The Archaeology of Ireland* (1949), x.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

137 [824] now stretches from coast to coast. So much of the scene is fashioned by man that it requires an effort of the imagination as well as the findings of scientific research to picture the landscape as it was before his coming. Palaeo-botanists, from their studies of plant-remains and pollen-grains preserved in the peats (Chapter XIV), are slowly reconstructing the post-glacial succession of forests as arctic willow, birch, hazel, pine, alder and oak spread in turn over the face of the land. The dwarf vegetation of the early post-glacial period, with its scattered birchwoods, was too thin to form peat, but with the warmer climate of the Boreal phase (beginning about 7000 B.C.) pine and hazel, followed by oak and elm, spread across the country, and both fen-peat and wood-peat began to form in the undrained hollows of the lowlands. The growth of forest and peats was accelerated as the warm seas of the succeeding Atlantic period flooded the coasts at a time of rising sea-level, between 5000 and 2500 B.C. During this phase the alder flourished and the high humidity brought the rapid growth of sphagnum moss on the bogs.

It was during the following sub-Boreal period (2500–500 B.C.) that the Irish forests reached their greatest development, covering even the exposed seaward slopes of the western mountains where today not a single tree can be found growing. During this period, among the thinning forests of rocky hillslopes, man made his first clearings for cultivation and turned the mountain winds to profit in drying and harvesting his crops. 133 Thus the distribution of mountain masses gives a clue to the nuclear regions of Irish civilization, though it should be noticed that there are parts of the Central Lowland where thin dry gravel or limestone soils gave a more kindly foothold. As compared with the broad upland masses of Great Britain, the mountains of Ireland are broken into many fragments which lie scattered around the coasts. They fall, however, into four major divisions which are broadly distinguished by age and structure: those of the north (Ulster) the west (Connacht) the south-west (Munster) and the south-east (Leinster) (Fig. 2).

Geologically the northern mountains are of immense antiquity, and rocks younger than the coal-measures, apart from the ubiquitous glacial deposits, are everywhere rare except in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FIG. 2. The Provinces of Ireland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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133 the extreme north-east, where granites and lavas of Tertiary age are outliers of the Scoto-Icelandic igneous province. In Co. Antrim the basaltic lavas have covered and preserved with their armour-plating both red Triassic sandstone and white Cretaceous limestone (chalk) to give sea cliffs of strangely contrasted colours facing the North Channel. The western mountains are also of great age: the monotony of their bog-strewn schists is relieved only by lines of great quartzite peaks which break into the ocean at Croaghaun and Slievemore in Achill Island. In the south-west the parallel folds of Old Red Sandstone finger out to the Atlantic between Dingle Head and Mizen Head, and here again the highest summits are all in sight of the sea. The granite core of the Wicklow Mountains dominates the south-east in the most massive and continuous high ground in the country, and touches the sea on the outskirts of Dublin. Similarly in the north-east Slieve Donard, the highest summit of the Mourne Mountains, raises its great dome to 2,796 ft. only 1½ miles from the Irish Sea.

174 133 Only on the east coast, between the Wicklow Chain and the Carlingford Mountains, is the highland rim broken wide open in a 50-mile gateway giving access to the interior. Floored by well-drained glacial soils and favoured by a low rainfall of less than thirty inches in the year, this strip of coast has been for 1,000 years Ireland's metropolitan region. In fact, long before Dublin was founded by the Vikings, Tara claimed to be the capital of all Ireland, and not far away the island's most spectacular prehistoric monuments—the corbelled chamber tombs of the Boyne Valley—take us back to the early Bronze Age. The dark age Middle Kingdom of Meath, based on Tara and the Boyne Valley, looks backward to the glories of the Bronze Age and forward to the English Pale which was the first conquest and the final refuge of the Anglo-Norman planters. Its landscape and character are distinctive to this day. What the Middle Kingdom and the Pale both lacked was a natural frontier to the west comparable to the Border Hills of Scotland or to the upland edge of the Welsh Marches.

174 The other four kingdoms, which have survived as the four provinces, broadly correspond to the four areas—north, west, south-west and south-east—which have upland massifs as their

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

174 from it. The Gaelic conquest of the Irish Midlands was not completed until the sixth century A.D., and down to the Anglo-Norman invasions the distinction between free and tributary tribes remained.[1] The counties bordering the middle Shannon—Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford and the western parts of Westmeath and Offaly—are probably as full of survivals as any in Ireland. This is the land of the loy and the steeveen (Chapter X) and the last home of many an ancient custom. The lowland
● [133] of which it is the centre is floored with limestone levelled off at about 200 ft. but diversified by occasional low hills, by intricate solution lakes and by glacial eskers and drifts among which lie countless small lakes and bogs (Fig. 3). It is hard to realize
[489] the isolation from which this area suffered before the introduction of improved wheeled vehicles and the coming of the canal and the railway.[2]

311 Let us now look at the cultural landscape which the hand of man has fitted to the physical frame of the island. Although man has been in this country for only a fraction of the time he has occupied South England and the continent, his mark is everywhere. Wander where you will through the length and breadth of the island, and through the dozens of lesser isles around its shores, and you will never fail to see traces of human activity, past or present, even in the most empty and inaccessible spots. Apart from the more or less datable remains of church and rath, castle and cairn, the land is covered with the marks of man's toil. The history of rural Ireland could be read out of doors, had we the skill, from the scrawlings made by men in the field boundaries of successive periods. In them the unlettered countryman wrote his runes on the land. The student of historical geography has been greatly assisted in the task of interpreting this palimpsest by the new tool of air-photography which, given suitable conditions, will pick out all man-made marks on the face of the earth.

311 178 The sturdy field walls and hedged banks which give the countryside its intimate character are by no means as immutable

[1] T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (1946), 204.

[2] Improvements in public transport were initiated by the Italian, Bianconi, who, profiting from the cavalry horses thrown on the market after the Napoleonic wars, began his famous fleet of 'cars' in Tipperary in 1815.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FROM FOREST TO FARMLAND

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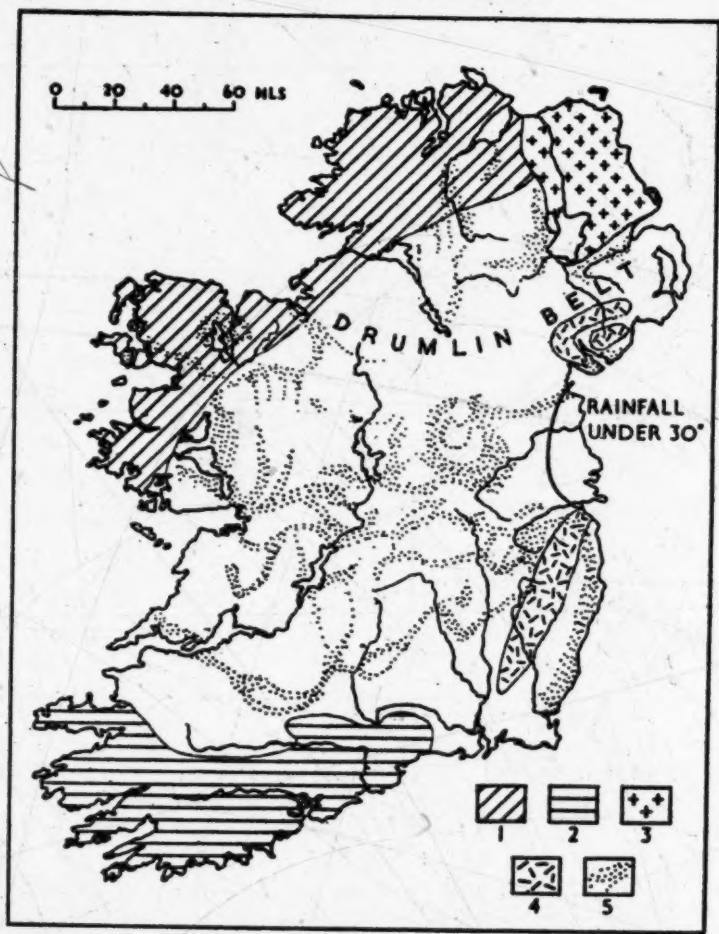

FIG. 8. Some landscape features. (1) Caledonian Highlands, (2) Armorican ridge and valley, (3) North-eastern basalts, (4) Eastern granites, (5) Glacial sands and gravels (eskers) (after J. K. Charlesworth). Drumlins are little hills composed of glacial drift. See Pl. 5, 1.

as they appear. The pattern they make has changed with the centuries in response to new needs and new tools. At present we are in a period of fairly rapid change, for the tractor calls for larger and more regular fields than those made by the spade

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE 5

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1. Flax in stook in drumlin country, Co. Down. Flax-dam on right.

2. Spreading flax from the dam, Co. Down.

[facing p. 96]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE 7

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Winnowing oats with a skin wight, Co. Donegal.

[facing p. 112]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

246 412 The Irish prefer the long-handled scythe. The sned, about five-and-a-half feet long, has the lower handgrip offset, and a pointed iron spike is sometimes driven into the end of the sned to anchor it safely when honing (Fig. 53). A test of a well-

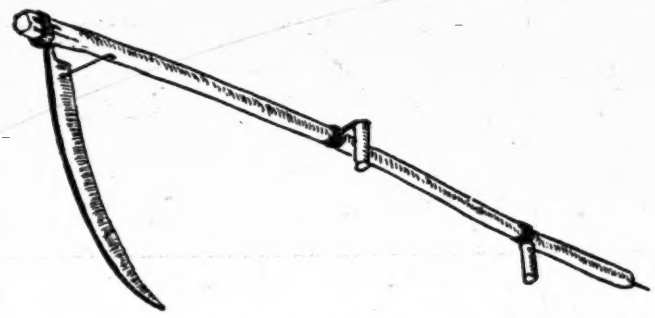

FIG. 53. Long-handled scythe, Donegal.

sharpened scythe is that it should 'cut wool moving downstream', and there was a special charm used in sharpening. The sanded scytheboard (strickle) has now given way to the artificial stone, though hones of natural stone, including the fossilized wood of Lough Neagh, are used locally. A smith-made scythe-blade is highly prized and long after its legitimate life has ended lengths of it will be utilized for choppers and turnip knives. For full efficiency one must be measured for the fitting and hanging of a scythe. The lower handle should be at arm's length from the bottom of the sned, the upper one distant from the top by the length from elbow to finger-tips. The two handles should also be a cubit apart. The angle of the blade is determined by swinging the left leg and adjusting the blade until its point comes within a nicely determined distance of it when the sned is held upright against the right leg. The scythe cradle, for gathering the swathe as it is cut, is rarely met with in Ulster, save for makeshift devices such as a bit of sacking fitted against the 'grass-nail' which joins sned and blade in the angle where they meet. In the south and south-east of the country, where the scythe is an old introduction, quite elaborate cradles both of wood and of finely-wrought iron are to be seen.

[133] [184]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE II

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Kelp gatherers near Fair Head, Co. Antrim.

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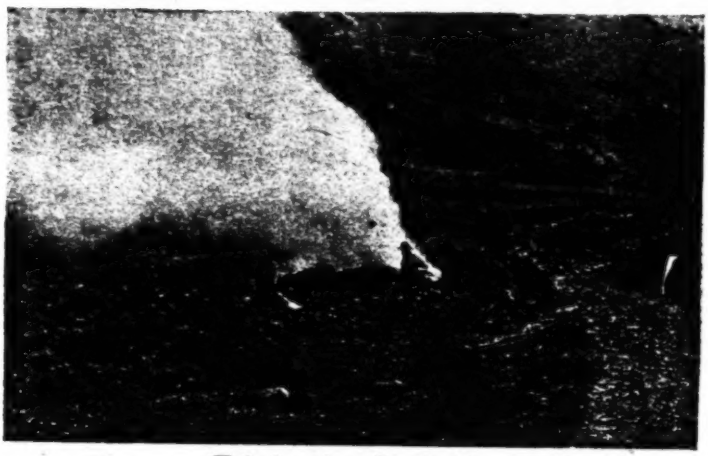

Kelp-burning, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 160]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

would have been undertaken so long as supplies of timber were available, though Petty observed that 'the cutting and carriage of turf was easier than that of wood.'[1] We may think of turf as supplementing and then coming to replace wood fuel, though in fact some wood is still very desirable to supplement the slow-burning turf, especially the quick-burning gorse and bog-fir which are the most readily available sources in treeless areas.

It is calculated that at least one fifth of the country is coated with bog, but a small proportion of this could be classed as reclaimed bog. It occurs not only in all the mountain areas but also, and more conspicuously, in the ill-drained hollows of the lowlands where glacial deposits had blocked the natural flow of waters or human occupation had brought about environmental changes. It is estimated that in recent years over 5 million tons of dried domestic fuel have been cut annually, representing a weight as cut of some 40 million tons. At this rate the supply is reckoned to last for 500 years, but this makes no allowance for the increasing exploitation of peat for the thermal generation of electricity and for the extraction of by-products. There is, however, a slow accretion of peat in many areas, though this consists mostly of sphagnum peat and the good-quality fen and forest peats of the deeper bogs are not being replaced. In fact these deeper layers tend to remain untapped either because the water cannot be drained away, or because layers of tree-stumps defy the attacks of both spade and mechanical digger.

The main causative factor in bog-formation is waterlogged soil, which checks the decomposition of vegetable remains. It therefore depends to a considerable extent on climate and on the balance between precipitation and evaporation. It is generally held that past phases of bog-growth can be correlated with periods of climatic deterioration, and horizons which are believed to mark the changed conditions can be traced in most of the deep bogs. In Scandinavia the most important of such 'recurrence horizons' has been dated by pollen-analysts and archaeologists to about 400 B.C.: the stormy sub-Atlantic climate whose beginning is thus chronicled is believed to have improved somewhat early in the Christian era, but to have suffered two further periods of worsening about A.D. 400 and

[1] Sir W. Petty, op. cit., 82.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

103 banshees (see below). Knockaunamoughilly is named from a
173 "Boughil," and other "sham men" appear at the Farbreagas in Cloontra and Cloongaheen. Seefin in Kilseily is another "seat of Finn." Some names are more doubtful. Lough Graney, the river Graney, and Tomgraney, are attributed to a suspicious solar heroine, the lady "Gillagreine" or "Grainne of the bright cheeks."

II. *Banshees.*

173 Above the Shannon gorge, overlooking a beautiful mass of
176 mountains, the southern arm of Lough Derg, and the river and Killaloe with its weirs, rises the great brown and purple bluff
133 of Craglea. Above the low earthworks and mound of stones
[172] that mark the ninth-century fort of Prince Lachtna ascends a rough lane. Further up on the east flank a little well, Tobereevul, gushes out from under a low rock amid the ferns,[19] and on the west side,—up a lonely valley, a long-forgotten battlefield, "Crag Liath where shields were cleft," in one of Brian Boru's earlier combats with the Norsemen,—rises a high crag called Craganeevul. The names of both well and crag commemorate the tutelary spirit of the House of Cass, Aibhill or, more correctly, Aibhinn, "the lovely one," once, it may be, the goddess of the House.

175 On Good Friday, A.D. 1014, Brian, the aged monarch of all
176 Erin, knelt in his tent praying for victory, while the battle raged over the low ridge now crowded by the houses of northern Dublin and on to the weirs of Clontarf. News came that his brave son's standard had fallen, and his page entreated him to ride back to the camp. "Oh, God! thou boy," cried Brian, "retreat becomes us not, and I myself know that I shall not depart alive, for Aibhill of Crag Liath came to me last night, and she told me that I should be killed today."[20] How many centuries of faith lay behind the king's fatalism, who can say? As the Gauls worshipped another banshee, Catabodva,

[19] It still exists, though marked only "site of" in the new Ordnance Survey maps.

[20] *Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (Ed. Dr. Todd, Rolls Series).

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

A FOLKLORE SURVEY OF COUNTY CLARE (*continued*).

XIX. *Rocks, Caves, and Stones.*

133 773 823 *Rock markings.*—The strange marks left in the flat crags by the weathering of softer portions and of fossils have caused numerous legends. The dish-like hollows in the crags below the hermitage of St. Colman MacDuach, at the great "Cliff of the Eagle," in Kinallia, the name Bohernameesh (*bothar na mias, i.e.* road of the dishes), and marks like the footprints of men and animals all seem to have been seized on by the saint's biographers.[1] Colman, brother of King Guaire "the hospitable," of Hy Fiachrach Aidhne (the district round Gort), early in the seventh century retired to fast and pray in the wilderness. After a most austere observance of Lent, a companion monk yearned for meat, and Colman pitied him and prayed. The king's Easter feast therefore flew to the hermitage, pursued by the whole Court. Terrified by the angry warriors Colman again prayed, and their feet and the hoofs of their horses stuck fast in the rocks. The legend is still told in a form identical with that in the Life.[2] The servant is said to have died from the feast, and his grave is shown beside the Boher.[3]

Where Burren and Inchiquin meet, on the Glasgeivnagh Hill,

[1] Cf. *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick* (ed. W. Stokes, Rolls Ser.), p. 405.

[2] Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ.*

[3] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100 (Ms. Royal Irish Academy).

[P 253]

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

the marks on the fretted rocks are attributed to the grey cow of Lon mac Leefa (Liomhtha). It is a very lonely and impressive spot. Ascending at the beautiful waterfall of the Seven Streams in Teeskagh, (a curtain of silver network over a cliff, sheeted with long moss and ferns, with ledges white with anemones, in spring, and fields blue with gentians), the great triple stone fort of Cahercommaun is seen on the edge of the northern cliff, and the way passes another early enclosure, with ruins of huts, called Cahernaglasha, where the *Glas* cow was stabled and her seven keepers lived. The highest point of Slievenaglasha,—rising 700 feet above the sea, which is visible far to the west,—has fourteen cairns and overlooks a long shallow valley, with strange brown patches here and there and another strong ring wall over a little cave. The patches are the *labbas* or beds of the *Glas* and her calf, the waterfall sprang from the abundant milk of the cow, and the fort is Mohernagartan ("the smith's fort"), the residence of Lon the Smith. The footprints of the wonderful animal and of Lon's seven sons are visible on every crag, and the cave with strange cinder-like débris is the reputed forge of the "dark brown Luno" of (Macpherson's) Ossian.[4]

At Ballynahown in Corcomroe, overlooked by the bold peel tower of Ballinalacken, are traces of the *Heanbo* (single cow), which differs from the *Glas* and gives its name to the Labbanaheanbo, a cave high up in the face of a magnificent cliff. In the bed the Heanbo will support the Leinster man who will win the freedom of Ireland in the last great battle. The cave is at the junction of three townlands, but is in none of them.[5]

On Scattery Island were two stones (still, I think, visible), one called Glun Senain because marked by the knee (*glun*) of St. Senan, and the other the stone on which St. Cannara[6] floated from Kilconry to the holy isle of the woman-fearing saint.

[4] *Ordnance Survey Letters* (Co. Clare), vol. i., p. 100. I gave the legend in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxv., p. 227, and it is still told in the locality.

[5] From Messrs. Kelleher and Hilary of Oughtdarra, to whose kindness and local knowledge I am much indebted. Cf. *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxxv., p. 346.

[6] Vol. xxii., p. 332, n. 2.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

1

The Island and Its Past

Prehistoric Period (9000 B.C. to 500 A.D.)

133 FORMED SINCE THE RETREAT over 12,000 years ago of the Weichsel glacier, Inis Beag consists of a block of limestone, Carboniferous in age, the geological axis of which is aligned northwest to southeast. The block has a gentle southwest dip, and its massive grey limestone strata are separated by narrow bands of water-bearing shales. There are two physical subdivisions in the island. On the northeast side, differential erosion has formed a series of terraces 133 separated by small cliffs a dozen or so feet in height. The greater share of good 134 arable land is found in this subdivision, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and ice. These soils have been deepened artificially by the islanders through adding sand, seaweed, and compost. On the southwest side of Inis Beag is a more even surface, composed largely of pavement covered here and there by indigenous and manufactured soils, sloping from the 212-feet-high terrace crest almost as the dip of the strata to the Atlantic coast. The bare limestone surfaces are intersected in all directions by deep crevices, and in places the rocks form large slabs or are so fissured as to present a series of 133 vertical ridges. Found in the joints are most of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs [134]—of the island. The rocky appearance of the "back of the island" (see Fig. 1), as the people call this second subdivision, is accentuated by numerous granite and sandstone erratics dropped by the retreating glacier.

172 As yet no evidence of the Paleolithic has come to light in Ireland. The Mesolithic is dated from 6500 to 3000 B.C.; thus early man may have entered Ireland hard on the heels of the disappearing ice, as he did in other parts of Europe, crossing from the Continent on land bridges which then existed where the English Channel and Irish Sea now flow. A Neolithic period lasting only 1000 years existed in Ireland, and its artifacts at particular sites show a merging with earlier Mesolithic and later Copper-Bronze Age forms. Inis Beag contains a profusion of Copper-Bronze Age remnants, created before the coming of the Celts

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 1. The back of the island from the lighthouse

with an Iron Age culture about 350 B.C.; but only in 1961 were earlier Neolithic, or possibly Mesolithic, implements discovered. When my wife and I arrived in the island for a seven week visit during the summer of 1962, we were presented with three slate axe heads which had been unearthed by road workers the previous December. It is possible that they are Mesolithic, for the industry never has been dated accurately.

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The principal Copper-Bronze Age monuments of Inis Beag are Megalithic tombs and burial mounds, and possibly kitchen middens and semi-subterranean stone dwellings, called *clochán*. Small gallery graves incorporated into lately built stone walls are common, but it appears that they never have been examined by prehistorians, for there is no record of them in the literature. Archeologists seldom have visited the back of the island where the prehistoric and medieval populations, contrary to present day opinion, may have centered. None of the Inis Beag *clochán* have been dated, but it is known that they were lived in by clerics and ascetics during the Middle Ages, and were still used as living quarters in a nearby island early last century. It is as difficult to ascertain the age of burial mounds and middens in Ireland as it is of stone houses, because they too were formed over several historical periods. Burial mounds of earth and stone, termed respectively tumuli and cairns by archeologists, first were erected during the Copper-Bronze Age and continued to be built into the early modern period (although not for funerary purposes). There are numerous mounds in Inis Beag, but in many instances it is hard to distinguish on sight cairns from *clochán* in their ruinous, overgrown condition. The islanders regard both types of structures as burial sites. Middens can be dated from the Mesolithic to the end of the medieval era. Most of the island middens are associated with dwelling places from the Middle Ages, but those located near the mouths of caves in the limestone cliffs of the terraces

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(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 3. Church of the patron saint and the cemetery

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on the island during the early part of the sixth century. A low wall with two openings has been constructed about the spring, and it is visited frequently by those wishing to obtain water or to pray. I was told by the owners of surrounding fields that when they were children many gallery grave tombs stood in the area, but most of these were removed when the fields first were improved and seeded. Most islanders will not molest prehistoric and medieval monuments, especially those that they believe are burial places, out of reverence for the dead or fear of the ghosts or fairies who reside within them; but down the centuries, such structures gradually have disappeared by being torn down to satisfy building and farming needs. It is the emphatic claim of the folk that the sacred well was created miraculously by the visiting saint and has never dried up, but two unbiased observers reported to me that they had seen it waterless during especially dry summers.

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At least twice during the Middle Ages Inis Beag was laid waste by invading forces: first by Vikings in 1081 (and maybe on other occasions between the ninth and eleventh centuries, when much of Ireland came under the control of Norwegians and Danes), and then in 1334 by Sir John Darcy, the Lord Justice of Ireland, who with a large fleet and army sailed around the Irish coast implementing British rule. The islanders believe that Inis Beag was completely depopulated by the Vikings and possibly by the Darcy expedition, and again by wars once, and maybe twice, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Modern Period (1500 to 1900)

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The castle in Inis Beag built within the Celtic promontory fort, probably erected in the sixteenth century by the mainland family who owned the island,

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

175 [702] [648] The castle and watch tower still dominate the Inis Beag skyline, and the latter serves as a landmark for fishermen posting their nets. Another landmark, at the southeast tip of the island, is a 110-feet-high lighthouse built during the 1850s.

175 173 731 244 Written sources and local traditions disagree as to the effects of the great famine on Inis Beag. Some observers claim that the potato blight completely destroyed island crops, and the folk were forced to depend on secondary agricultural commodities, livestock, fish, and limpets in order to survive; conversely, others maintain that the blight did not penetrate the island until much later. According to my Inis Beag respondents, the blight did contaminate some gardens, but enough [457] were spared so that the islanders were not greatly inconvenienced. In fact, potatoes [161] were exported by some farmers to help feed starving mainlanders. Between 1841 and 1851, the population of Inis Beag increased by 62 persons, at a time when [167] most other Irish communities had dwindling populations. The first record of substantial emigration from the island, mostly to the United States, was in 1822.

Contemporary Setting

131 Inis Beag has a northeast to southwest topographical axis, at right angles to its geological axis, and is a mile and three-quarters in length and a quarter of a [161] mile less in width. A population of 350 persons inhabits four villages, and the [361] island comprises 1440 acres. When giving directions informally, the folk refer to [823] the beach side as the north side and the back of the island bordering the Atlantic as the south side; then, the sound separating Inis Beag from Inis Thiar becomes the west side, and the sound between Inis Beag and the mainland the east side. I will follow this practice when describing various geographical and other features • 133 in this chapter. Between the mainland and Inis Beag, a reef extending from the island far out into the east sound is a menace to shipping; it was on this reef within 200 yards of the shore that the freighter ran aground in 1960.

133 311 A large beach and a contiguous stretch of common land, which together make up over 200 of the island's 1440 acres, dominate the north side of Inis Beag. The beach is known as the "strand," following English usage, and lies west and north of the common land, about midway between the sounds (see Figs. 4, 9, and 10). It is thought that several hundred years ago arable land existed where the common land does today, and the strand was very narrow; but gradually sand accumulated, widening the beach and burying more and more farm land as it crept eastward. If one examines the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1841 and 1902, the slow encroachment of the sand can be noted. The common land was about half its present size in 1841, and 60 years later almost 70 acres of cultivable soil had been engulfed. The tops of fences projecting above the surface at the present time attest to the shifting of the sand, as does the buried church of the patron saint, and sand now threatens fertile plots on the east side of the island.

[361] There are six major and several minor terraces in Inis Beag, of which the lower two underlie the strand, the common land, and two of the four villages. The lower terraces are broad and the upper ones narrow and precipitous, while weather-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 4. Low Village and Inis Thiar from the castle

ing has obscured in most places the disconformities between strata. Four rift valleys indent the terraces, and the eastern one runs the entire length of the island to the ocean and holds a 90-feet-deep fresh water lake (see Fig. 7). This valley and two of the other three to the west of it running half the length of the island form two promontories on the upper terraces of which the other villages are situated. Indenting only the lower terraces, the fourth rift is a minor one; it forms the valley in which the axe heads were discovered. Wells are found in each of the rift valleys where shale strata are bared. The four villages, from west to east, are Low, High, Castle, and Terrace.

Located in Low Village (see Fig. 4) are two grocery stores, known as "shops," and an old coast guard station, and in High Village are the post office and church; other buildings of importance are the new school on the common land and the lighthouse at the back of the island. I already have described the monuments of historical significance so need not consider them further. The older of the two shops in Inis Beag is situated at the southwest margin of the common land, while the other stands close to the rocky shore at the north end of the community. Simply a large, narrow room on the ground floor of the two-story dwelling of its owner, each shop also serves as a public house, or "pub," where wines, spirits, beer, stout, soft drinks, and tobacco are sold. Benches along wall and counter serve the customers who linger, and purchases are made across the counter or in a small enclosed room near the door, called the "snug." The usual occupants of the shop are men who come to drink, smoke, visit with their neighbors, and sometimes purchase goods for their families. Women and children when buying provisions usually enter the snug for privacy and confer with the shopkeeper through an aperture opening on the counter. At night, the snug allows small groups of men to discuss matters of a private nature over drinks.

Coast guard personnel first were assigned to Inis Beag shortly after the

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

241 soil covered. There was little "field-making" at the beginning of this century, and
[731] few plots south of the terrace crest were utilized for farming. Fields on the terraces were planted yearly with potatoes and other vegetables, but in the 1920s the "eelworm" parasite invaded the island and forced the present custom of
[659] fallowing plots for at least four years. This development necessitated the creation of new fields at the back, and when the government began to subsidize field making during the 1930s, and fence construction later on, another impetus to the manu-
[114] facture of additional land was provided. Most of the literature pertaining to Inis Beag, influenced by nativism and primitivism, claims that field and fence building has proceeded for centuries (even millennia) and disavows the existence of indigenous soils.

221 The year in Inis Beag commences in February with the advent of spring,
222 when seaweed is gathered, fields are manufactured, and crops are planted. Although
241 some seaweed is collected in the summer and autumn and stored in "cocks" near the shore or in outbuildings for later use, most of it is cut and pulled in January
• [133] and February at the time of spring tides. There is a maximum 15¾ feet difference between flood and ebb spring tides in Inis Beag, and normally submerged reefs rich in seaweed are bared three to four hours daily for two or three days twice each month. The men await a "good strand" to gather seaweed, when the tide is lowest during the daylight hours and not influenced by wave or swell action, for this is a dangerous task which sometimes demands wading in water thigh deep. The folk are amused greatly by a sequence from a noted film about them depicting a woman carrying seaweed along the coast during a raging storm; the footage was created by the producer to satisfy esthetic canons and to portray the primitive and Celtic virtues.

241 The generic term for natural fertilizers is "manure" and includes seaweed, compost, and guano. The islanders also use chemical fertilizers to some extent, particularly in areas where soils are deficient in manganese. Compost varies much in composition and may include human and animal feces, called "dung," turf ashes, and decaying vegetable matter, such as ferns and the sod "scraws" of thatched roofs
[514] being dismantled. Nowhere in the literature is the use of human manure mentioned, and the folk are extremely secretive about its use, as they also are about burning cow dung for fuel in times of emergency. Their reticence about disclos-
[654] ing these practices is a product of sexual puritanism. Young farmers are more willing than their elders to follow the advice of the Department of Agriculture agent stationed in a neighboring island, and are coming to use chemical fertilizers more commonly than was the case in the past. The islanders eschew artificial commodities which impinge on the human body, and often I have heard chemical fertilizers denounced because they supposedly are manufactured from "bones of evil persons buried in cemeteries" on the Continent, or victims of the plague centuries ago. Some farmers hold artificial fertilizers to blame for both the potato blight and the eelworm parasite.

824 Four kinds of seaweed are utilized by the folk: ribbon weed, string weed or sea thong, red or May weed, and black weed or bladder wrack. The most commonly used variety is red weed, once the major source of kelp, which is washed in
[437] the year around and is stripped of its leaves when collected. Its stems are known

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted.

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The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder.

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migratory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are puncruated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

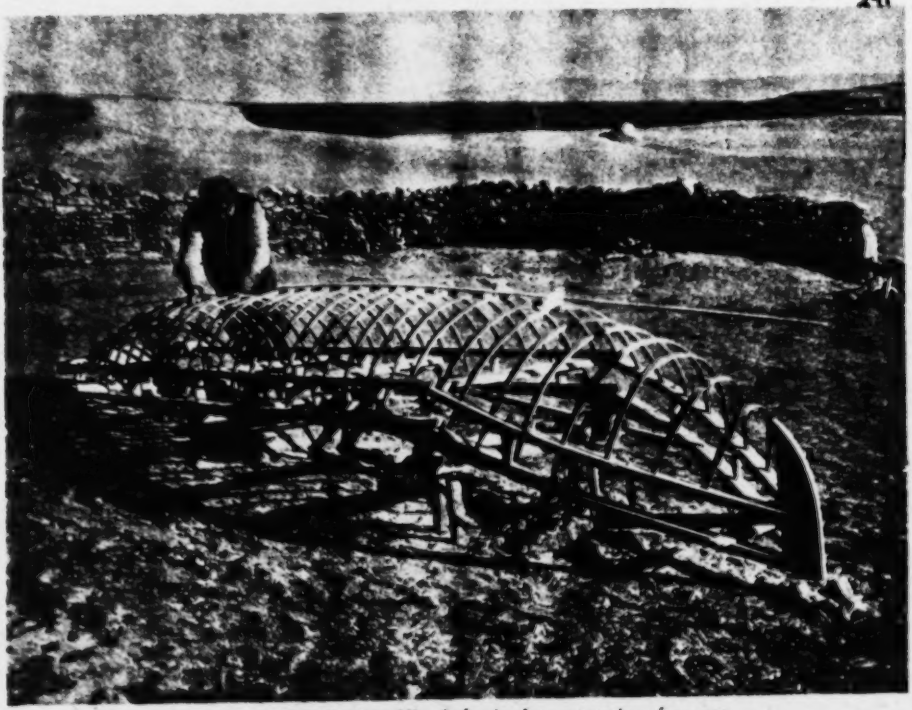

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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The Village and the Family

Village Differences

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103 LOW VILLAGE RECEIVES ITS NAME from its position on the lowest terrace of Inis Beag (see Fig. 4). It borders the ocean and strand, while High Village to the east is located in a wide expanse south of the common land formed by a concavity in the upper terraces. On the western of the two promontories high above the beach, separated from Low and Terrace by rift valleys, is Castle Village. Below it are the cemetery enclosing the church of the patron saint and the new school, and above it are the castle, the ruined monastery, the Napoleonic watch tower, and what remains of the old school next to the tower. The Ordnance Survey [138] [823] Maps place the highest elevation of Inis Beag in the vicinity of the tower, but the folk claim that the most elevated portion of the crest is above High. Terrace Village, on the promontory to the east, presents a breath-taking view of the lake (see Fig. 7), the sound, and towering mountains and cliffs along the mainland coast. Low merges with High, but Castle and Terrace, because they are located on high terraces and bounded by rift valleys, are isolated units. Terrace is aligned north and south, but the other three settlements are aligned roughly east and west. The southernmost house of Terrace and the westernmost one of Low are approximately 1500 yards apart, and the intervening distance can be walked comfortably in less than 12 minutes.

Below are the number of inhabited houses and the population of each village:

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	Houses	*Population*
Low Village	24	119
High Village	16	59
Castle Village	17	99
Terrace Village	14	73

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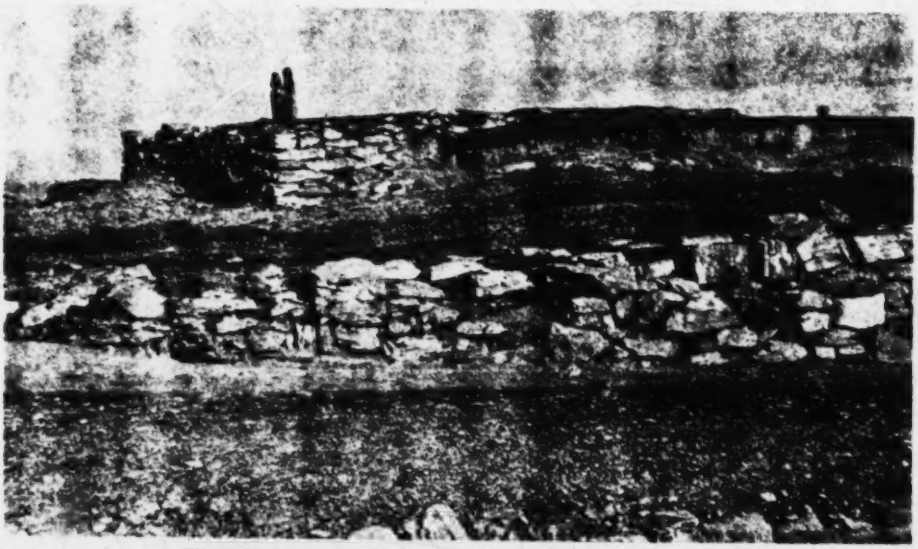

Figure 12. Copper-Bronze Age tumulus—home of the pookah

776 [171] black dog which roams the road by the Catholic church and cemetery in the village of St. Patrick, altering its size instantaneously (Messenger 1967:37–38).

764 178 Witchcraft once flourished in Inis Beag, so it is held, but today only the casting of the evil eye still is practiced. The most common witch of the past was an ugly old woman, called a "hag witch," who was native to Inis Beag or a transient nighttime intruder from nearby islands and the mainland. She was able to fly through the air swiftly, make herself invisible, assume any size or shape, enter the body of an animal, and perpetrate black magic. Her favorite animal familiar was the rabbit and her favorite target the cow, whose milk she purloined after midnight from beasts pastured at the back of the island. Like the trooping fairies, she too stole the souls of children and left ailing changelings in their stead. When it was suspected by parents that a child was a changeling rather than their human offspring, it was customary to throw it into the fireplace or burn the bedding on which it lay in order to retrieve the departed soul; if the perpetrator were a witch, she would leap from the flames with a "wild shriek" and vanish, leaving the restored child in perfect health in her place. I was told in Inis Thiar of islanders there who bear scars from being burned when their souls were rescued by this expediency.

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754 [624] [576] Three Inis Beag persons are accused of possessing the evil eye and thus are shunned by their fellows. Such a witch is known by a disfigurement in or near his left eye, from which the malignant force emanates, and by his ability to cause

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Inis Beag

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although inheritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establishment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "villages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, separated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices,

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which contain a large portion of the natural flora—herbs and shrubs—of the island. Stone fences delimit many hundreds of plots which compose most of the two-square-mile land surface of Inis Beag.

The island boasts a post office with radio-telephone facilities, a "national school" in which three teachers instruct ninety pupils in the seven "standards," two provision shops with attached "pubs," a former coast guard station now housing the nurse and a knitting industry which employs local girls, a lighthouse, and a chapel served by a curate who resides nearby. Inis Beag lacks electricity and running water, and the only vehicles are several ass-drawn carts which are able to travel the narrow, fence-bordered trails. A small "steamer" carrying supplies, passengers, and mail to and from a mainland port visits the island at least once each week. That Inis Beag has experienced far less cultural change than other island communities of Ireland is largely due to the fact that, in absence of a deep water quay, the steamer has had to stand off the strand and be met by "canoes." Most of the tourists who come to the island stay only for the hours that the steamer is anchored and go ashore mainly for the thrill of riding in the canoes, which the island men row with consummate skill. Insofar as I can discover, the inhabitants of Inis Beag are less prone to visit the mainland than are the peoples of other Irish islands.

INIS BEAG
HISTORY AND CULTURE[2]

The prehistory and history of Inis Beag are recorded dramatically in a multitude of monuments and artifacts of stone and metal, including Neolithic axe-heads and kitchen middens, Copper-Bronze Age gallery grave tombs and burial mounds of earth and stone, an Iron Age promontory fort, and medieval Christian monasteries, churches, cemeteries, stone houses, and a sacred well, as well as a three-story tower house built by the political overlords of the island. Irish nativists claim that the contemporary folk are lineal descendants of ancient, once civilized

[2] The culture described herein is that of 1959–1960 and excludes important changes which have occurred since then, such as those resulting from the introduction of television, a summer language school for pupils from the mainland, and free secondary education.